

The rest-houses in these parts are a great convenience to travellers, but might easily be improved. Doubtless they are liable to abuse at times, but there are permanent causes of discomfort which might be removed. For the insect plague there is probably no remedy, but, on a hill-slope, the construction of a dry floor and a chimney with sufficient draught to carry up the smoke seems not impracticable. To the natives the warmth of the smoke from the green fuel on the hearth compensates for its pungency, but my eyes never became habituated to the discomfort.

At Fobrang, a tiny village of about half a dozen houses, at an altitude of about 14,800 feet, probably the highest cultivated place in the world, we halted for some days to await the arrival of the caravan. Here we obtained the last instalment of the supplies which our good friend Bishan Dass had collected for us; we also purchased sheep for transport purposes, and arranged for carriers to go on ahead with the sheep by easy stages as far as the Lanak La, on the west side of which they would find grass.

When our preparations were complete the caravan, all told, consisted of Pike and myself, Leno (the sub-surveyor), Rassoula (cook), one Ghurka orderly, two sikhs, Dass (cook for the Hindus), Ramzan (caravan bashi), ten caravan men, and one shepherd, besides the carriers who were sent on in front with the sheep. The transport animals comprised twenty-seven mules, thirty-five ponies, and fifty sheep, but there were among us also three riding ponies and a donkey, a very fine one, which had been given to Rassoula. The mules were said to be Chinese, but their native land was doubtful; the ponies were from Kargil, Zanskar, and Ladak; two of the riding ponies were from Badakshan, the other and the donkey from Yarkand. Our baggage contained personal effects,